

Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition Receives National Award

The Chronic Disease Directors (CDD) recently honored outstanding achievements in chronic disease prevention and health promotion during the 18th National Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in Washington, D.C., co-sponsored by the CDD, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Prevention Research Services.

Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition (TFKC) was awarded the Public Policy Award for effectively promoting policy change to reduce the chronic disease burden on a national, state, or local level. Joan H. Smith, TFKC President, accepted the award.

The awards honored a range of recipients from individuals to organizations who have made significant contributions to the public health field.

The mission of the TFKC is to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use and addiction and to assist Kansans in avoiding the negative health and economic impact of tobacco use. The organization mounted a significant policy initiative aimed at decreasing the number of Kansas youth who use tobacco and successfully gained the governor's endorsement to raise the state tax on cigarettes.

While youth were making their views known across the state, the adult Coalition members recruited the support of a broad group of advocates for children and social service programs, including the medical providers, educators, medically underserved clinics, health insurance companies, state health agency, and professional organizations among others. The collective efforts of the partners were successful in gaining the Governor's endorsement of an increased excise tax.

The statewide efforts helped to increase the tax from \$0.24 to \$0.79 per pack.

The increase more than tripled the amount of tax per pack of cigarettes sold in Kansas. This raised the ranking from 34th in the nation to a ranking of

20th in the nation on the highest excise tax collected. An immediate impact of this successful policy is demonstrated by the 19 percent reduction in the number of high school students who smoke. This initial success in driving down youth rates has ignited the enthusiasm of the youth movement in the state to continue their involvement in policy and advocacy for clean indoor air policies.



The Chronic Disease Directors is a Washington, D.C.-based public health organization comprised of chronic disease program directors of each state and U.S. territory. CDD works to reduce the impact of chronic diseases on the American population. Since its founding in 1988, CDD has made impressive strides in mobilizing national efforts to reduce chronic diseases and the associated risk factors.